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Sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Durban, South Africa, 2011

A. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/200, invited the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

B. Outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

1. Summary

2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011 and comprised the following sessions:

(a) The seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

(b) The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;

(c) The thirty-fifth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation;

(d) The thirty-fifth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice;

(e) The fourth part of the fourteenth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol;

(f) The fourth part of the sixteenth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

3. The Durban Conference enjoyed a high level of participation and was attended by nine Heads of State and Government, 5,400 Government delegates, 5,800 observers and 1,200 media representatives. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted 19 decisions, and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted 17 decisions. The outcomes include critically important decisions that have the following three key elements:

(a) A second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, to start in January 2013;

(b) The affirmation of the mitigation pledges under the Convention covering the period from now until 2020 made by 89 countries, both industrialized and developing, and covering 80 per cent of global emissions. In addition, agreement was reached on how and by when both developed and developing countries would report on these mitigation efforts, as well as on the details of verifying them;

(c) The identification by Governments of a path towards the future legal climate framework that would be applicable to all. Countries set a deadline of 2015 for the conclusion of these negotiations and a deadline of 2020 for the entry into force of the new agreement.

4. At the Conference, the infrastructure needed to support developing countries in a fully functioning climate regime evolved significantly. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted decisions on three key issues: the governing instrument of the Green Climate Fund; the terms of reference of the Climate Technology Centre and Network, which is the implementing arm of the Technology Mechanism; and the launch of the Adaptation Committee, which will coordinate and guide adaptation action.

5. In 2012, Governments were continuing the work being done on each of these issues by developing the policies, processes and guidelines of the Green Climate Fund, identifying a host for the Climate Technology Centre and Network, and holding the initial meetings of the Adaptation Committee.

6. Parties also reached agreement on the need to increase the level of ambition to curb greenhouse gases, informed by the review of the adequacy of the global temperature goal of 2 degrees Celsius to be carried out during the period 2013-2015, as well as by the next assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

2. High-level segment

7. The joint high-level segment of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was opened by the President of the Conference, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, and was preceded by a welcoming ceremony attended by the President of South Africa, the Secretary-General and other dignitaries.

8. The Secretary-General delivered a statement on behalf of the United Nations system, recognizing the challenges posed by climate change and emphasizing the need to make progress and move forward on key issues. He asked parties to work to implement the Cancun Agreements, to demonstrate tangible progress on short- and long-term financing, to work towards a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and not to abandon the collective vision of a comprehensive legally binding climate change agreement that was both, effective and fair to all.

9. At the high-level segment, statements were made by 156 parties, of which 9 were made by Heads of State or Government, 5 by either vice-presidents or deputy prime ministers, 91 by ministers and 44 by representatives of parties.

3. Outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

Establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action

10. The Durban Conference achieved a critically important decision: Governments decided to launch a process for the development of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable

to all parties, through the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. Countries have set a deadline of 2015 for the conclusion of these negotiations and a deadline of 2020 for the entry into force of the new agreement.

11. The Ad Hoc Working Group launched its work at its first meeting, held from 17 to 25 May 2012, with the election of officers and the adoption of its agenda. The agenda will guarantee that attention is given both to the agreement to be reached by 2015 and to efforts to raise ambition to curb greenhouse gases up to 2020.

12. Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention decided that the Convention process should raise the level of ambition to curb greenhouse gases, informed by the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the outcomes of the 2013-2015 review of the long-term global goal and the work of the subsidiary bodies.

Outcomes on the implementation of the Bali Action Plan and the Cancun Agreements

13. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted a decision on the outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, encompassing all areas of work under the Bali Action Plan and the Cancun Agreements: a shared vision for long-term cooperative action, enhanced action on mitigation, enhanced action on adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building and the review of the adequacy of the long-term global goal.

14. In this context, the Conference agreed to continue working to identify a global goal for reducing global emissions by 2050 and to identify a time frame for the global peaking of emissions, and requested the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention to consider the issue of equitable access to sustainable development.

15. In addition, the parties adopted guidelines for the preparation of biennial reports by developed country parties, the first of which must be submitted to the Convention secretariat by January 2014, with subsequent biennial reports to be submitted two years after the due date of national communications. The Conference also adopted modalities and procedures for the international assessment and review of emissions and removals of greenhouse gas emissions of developed country parties.

16. With regard to mitigation by developing country parties, the Conference encouraged those parties to develop low-emission development strategies and adopted guidelines for the preparation of biennial update reports by parties not included in annex I to the Convention ("non-annex I parties"), with effect from December 2014. Modalities and guidelines for international consultation and analysis of the biennial update reports of non-annex I parties were also adopted at Durban.

17. Furthermore, guidance was provided in relation to a registry designed to facilitate the matching of actions seeking international support with available support by providing and directing information to parties that have submitted information on nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking support, as well as to parties and other entities that have submitted information on the support available. The Convention secretariat is currently developing a prototype for such a

registry with a view to finalizing it at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

18. The Conference also adopted a decision on the sources of results-based financing for activities related to REDD-plus,[1] and requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to consider issues related to agriculture with a view to adopting a decision on the matter at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

19. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention was requested by the Conference to conduct a work programme to consider a framework for various approaches, including opportunities for using markets; to enhance the cost-effectiveness of and promote mitigation actions; and to conduct a work programme to develop modalities and procedures for a new market-based mechanism.

20. The Conference of the Parties provided guidance to the Adaptation Committee, including with respect to the modalities for carrying out its functions, reporting on its activities to the Conference of the Parties, its composition and decision-making, and other relevant modalities of work. Guidance in respect of national adaptation plans was provided by the Conference of the Parties through agreement on a process to enable least developed countries to formulate and implement such plans, an invitation to developing countries that are not least developed countries to employ the modalities for them, and agreement on reporting, monitoring and evaluation with regard to the national adaptation plan process.

21. The Durban Conference also took a step forward in climate financing through the adoption of the governing instrument of the Green Climate Fund, which includes provisions on, inter alia, the Fund's objective and guiding principles, governance and institutional arrangements, the rules of procedure of its Board and the establishment of an independent secretariat for the Fund. The Conference of the Parties requested the Board of the Fund to select a trustee and to conduct a process for selecting a host country for the Fund by the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

22. The Conference of the Parties also provided guidance to the Standing Committee, including on its composition and working modalities, and decided that the Standing Committee would report, make recommendations and assist the Conference of the Parties in carrying out its functions with respect to the financial mechanism of the Convention. This would help to improve coherence and coordination in the delivery of climate change financing.

23. The outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group also included arrangements for the full operationalization of the Technology Mechanism, including the adoption of terms of reference for the Climate Technology Centre and Network, which outlined its missions, functions, architecture, roles and responsibilities, governance, structure, reporting and review. The criteria for the evaluation and selection of the host of the Centre and Network were also agreed by the parties, allowing for the prompt launch of the selection process.

[1] Refers to policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

24. The Conference adopted modalities and procedures for the Technology Executive Committee, which had been established under the Cancun Agreements at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. The modalities adopted relate to definitions, policy recommendations, linkage with other institutional arrangements, the engagement of stakeholders, and information- and knowledge-sharing. The Committee had met earlier in 2012 and developed its rolling workplan for the period 2012-2013.

25. The Durban Forum on Capacity-building was established with a view to the holding of annual in-depth discussions on that issue with the participation of parties, relevant bodies under the Convention, experts and practitioners. The Forum was held during the thirty-sixth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, earlier in 2012. Parties also worked on the further definition of the scope of the review of the global goal as established under the Cancun Agreements[2] and on the development of its modalities.

Other decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties

26. The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change has been recognized as a process aimed at informing the organization of potential future areas of work that could support the scientific and technical work carried out under the Cancun Adaptation Framework. In this context, the Conference of the Parties requested the secretariat of the Convention to organize a series of workshops, to prepare a compilation of case studies and to make better use of knowledge products and information generated under the Nairobi work programme for the benefit of parties.

27. In 2011, the work programme on approaches to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to enhance adaptive capacity was initiated by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, which is to make recommendations on such loss and damage to the Conference of the Parties. In addition, the Body has been requested by the Conference of the Parties to take into account a series of questions intended to serve as guidance for the further implementation of the work programme.

28. The Conference of the Parties also adopted a work programme on the impact of the implementation of response measures by the subsidiary bodies, with a view to improving the understanding of the impact of the implementation of response measures in such areas as cooperation on response strategies, the assessment and analysis of impacts and the exchanging of experience on and discussion of opportunities for economic diversification and transformation. Furthermore, a forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures was established by the Conference in order to implement the work programme and provide a platform allowing parties to share information, experiences, case studies, best practices and views on the issue.

29. The Global Environment Facility, as the operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention, reported to the Conference of the Parties on the steps that it had taken to implement the guidance provided by the Conference in previous years and on the support that it had provided to parties in relation to climate change.

[2] See decision 1/CP.16, paras. 4 and 138-140.

The Conference requested the Facility to continue working with its implementing agencies to further simplify and improve its processes, to continue enhancing the transparency of the project review process, to clarify the concept of additional costs as applied to adaptation projects, and to continue to provide resources for systematic observation and monitoring networks. The Facility was invited to continue to provide support to non-annex I parties on their technology needs assessments.

30. In addition, the Conference agreed on guidance with respect to systems for providing information on how safeguards for activities relating to REDD-plus, as agreed to in appendix I of decision 1/CP.16, were addressed and respected, and agreed that developing country parties undertaking such activities should provide information on that issue. The Conference also reached agreement on modalities for forest reference emission levels and forest reference levels, including guidelines for the submission of information on those reference levels.

31. After the consideration of relevant recommendations of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, the Conference of the Parties adopted the revised guidelines under the Convention for reporting on annual inventories of parties included in annex I to the Convention ("annex I parties") for trial use. In 2013, the Body is to begin considering information provided by annex I parties on their views and experience in using the guidelines, as well as their experience in using common reporting format reporter software that was recently upgraded.

4. Outcomes of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

32. At its seventh session, the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol agreed that the second commitment period under the Protocol was to begin on 1 January 2013 and was to last for a period of five or eight years, with the latter to be decided in 2012. Countries that will participate in the second commitment period under the Protocol will convert their emission reduction targets into quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives in order to ensure that reductions can be measured and assessed in accordance with Protocol rules and regulations. Furthermore, under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Protocol, parties reached agreements in the following areas:

(a) Land use, land-use change and forestry. The Conference adopted definitions, modalities, rules and guidelines relating to activities on this issue under the Protocol for application during the second commitment period. In addition, the Conference requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to initiate a series of work programmes relevant to this issue;

(b) Emissions trading and the project-based mechanisms. The Conference reconfirmed the use of the mechanisms under the Protocol as supplemental to domestic action by annex I parties. The Conference also decided to review and revise the design of the commitment period reserve for the subsequent commitment period in order to support the effective operation of emissions trading;

(c) Greenhouse gases, sectors and source categories, common metrics to calculate the carbon dioxide equivalence of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks, and other methodological issues;

(d) The consideration of information on potential environmental, economic and social consequences, including spillover effects, of tools, policies, measures and methodologies available to annex I parties. The Conference recognized the need to deepen understanding of this issue and recognized the establishment of a forum relevant to it under the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (see para. 28 above).

33. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Adaptation Fund Board to promote the accreditation of national implementing entities and direct access to Fund resources, requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to consider the initial review of the Fund with a view to recommending a draft decision and decided to complete that review, at its eighth session.

34. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol provided further guidance on the Clean Development Mechanism, including general guidance and guidance with regard to governance, baseline and monitoring methodologies and additionality, the registration of project activities, the issuance of certified emission reductions, the regional and subregional distribution of project activities and capacity-building.

35. The concept of materiality under the Clean Development Mechanism was defined by the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, which also decided on the initial scope of material information provided under the Mechanism. The Conference also requested the Executive Board of the Mechanism to implement the concept of materiality and report on the experience gained in its implementation, and to increase its interaction with designated operational entities in order to facilitate a uniform interpretation and application of that concept.

36. Guidance was also provided by the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol on the implementation of article 6 of the Protocol (on joint implementation), including in relation to its governance, and on the resources for the work carried out on joint implementation.

37. Parties were encouraged to further improve the implementation of capacity-building activities related to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol decided that the further implementation of the framework for capacity-building in developing countries should be improved at the systemic, institutional and individual levels, including by holding consultations with stakeholders, enhancing the integration of capacity-building needs related to the Protocol into national development strategies and plans, increasing country-driven coordination, and strengthening networking and information-sharing among developing countries.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

38. The General Assembly may wish to, inter alia:

(a) **Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;**

(b) Note the outcomes of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hosted by the Government of South Africa from 28 November to 9 December 2011;

(c) Urge the finalization and closure of the negotiating processes under the Bali Road Map;

(d) Pledge its support for the full and prompt implementation of the Cancun Agreements and the negotiating process under the Durban Platform;

(e) Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.

II. Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 66/201 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Introduction

39. In its resolution 66/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report constitutes an update to the Assembly on the principal activities undertaken in that respect.

B. Implementation of resolution 66/201

1. Background

40. In resolution 66/201, the General Assembly welcomed the outcomes of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, including the effort by the Conference of the Parties to find lasting solutions with respect to the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism. The continuing need to strengthen the scientific basis of the Convention was noted by the Assembly, particularly the decision of the Conference of the Parties to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into consideration regional balance, in order to further discuss options for the provision of scientific advice focusing on desertification, land degradation and drought issues. In this respect, the Assembly noted the efforts under way to develop and implement science-based and sound methods for monitoring and assessing desertification.

2. High-level meeting of the General Assembly

41. On 20 September 2011, the General Assembly convened a high-level meeting focusing on core issues of the Convention, with the theme "Addressing

desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication".

42. The high-level meeting was divided into four main events: an opening meeting, two meetings in the form of panel discussions and a closing plenary meeting. The morning panel was co-chaired by the President of Nigeria and the Deputy Prime Minister of Luxembourg, and the afternoon panel was co-chaired by the President of Austria and the Prime Minister of Fiji.

43. During the closing meeting, the President of the General Assembly presented a summary of the discussions. Salient elements of the President's summary included a call by many world leaders for the strengthening of the scientific base of the Convention with a view to a better understanding of desertification, land degradation and drought, the enhancement of the implementation of the Convention as a global policy and monitoring framework for addressing issues of land and soil degradation in all ecosystems affected by land degradation, and the setting-up of a measurable sustainable development goal and targets in order to enable the international community to move towards a land-degradation-neutral world.

44. As mandated under General Assembly resolution 65/160, the President of the Assembly also presented to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention a summary of the deliberations at the high-level meeting.

3. Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

45. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held in Changwon City, Republic of Korea, from 10 to 21 October 2011. The session was attended by 6,000 people, including more than 80 ministers, civil society representatives and nearly 100 business representatives. The opening meeting featured the participation of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Kim Hwang-sik, and the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

46. The Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, and the Prince of Wales addressed the Conference of the Parties by video link. Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang participated in his capacity as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

47. The Conference adopted 39 decisions on the implementation of the Convention, including decisions relating to science, technology and knowledge, with a view to making the Convention a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification, land degradation and drought. Other decisions concerned the review of the implementation of the Convention and the mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) for enhancing its implementation, the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism, collaboration with the Global Environment Facility, the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to address desertification, land degradation and drought, and the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

48. During the high-level segment of the session, three interactive round tables organized around topical, relevant themes attracted high-level participation. The theme of the first round table was "Desertification, land degradation and drought and food security: preserving the resource base for our food security"; the theme of the second was "The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the

context of Rio+20: addressing desertification, land degradation and drought as a cornerstone of the green economy", and the theme of the final round table was "Harnessing science and knowledge for combating desertification, land degradation and drought: the path to improvement".

49. A major innovation in the Convention process was the submission by the Republic of Korea of the "Changwon initiative", aimed at furthering the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework. The Conference of the Parties welcomed the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Korea in submitting the initiative and noted its potential to enhance efforts being made by country parties through action programmes to address desertification, land degradation and drought.

4. Consideration of desertification, land degradation and drought by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

50. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development devoted a great deal of attention to desertification, land degradation and drought. In its outcome document, entitled "The future we want" (see resolution 66/288), Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives attending the Conference recognized the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil management, and particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, poverty eradication, women's empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability.

51. Stressing the global dimension of challenges relating to desertification, land degradation and drought, they recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. Accordingly, world leaders pledged to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development. They also reaffirmed their resolve under the Convention to take coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels to monitor land degradation globally. In addition, they undertook to restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.

52. They resolved to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan and framework, including by mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources. The Conference noted the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management. In this regard, the Conference encouraged and recognized the importance of partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources. It also encouraged capacity-building, extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices.

53. With regard to the science and policy interface, the Conference took note of the decision of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to establish an ad hoc working group, taking into account regional balance, for the discussion of specific options for the provision of scientific advice to parties.

54. Expressing deep concern about the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel

region, the Conference called for urgent action through short-, medium- and long-term measures at all levels and reaffirmed the need for cooperation through the sharing of information at the global, regional and subregional levels regarding climate and weather as well as forecasting and early warning systems relating to desertification, land degradation and drought and to dust storms and sandstorms. In this regard, the Conference invited States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information and forecasting and early warning systems.

5. Towards synergistic action on the ground to achieve global goals in preserving biodiversity, combating desertification/land degradation and addressing climate change

55. In the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio Conventions and the Presidents of the respective Conferences of the Parties held a breakfast round table to discuss ways and means of generating synergies in national implementation and in support of sustainable development. In a joint statement, the top officials of the three Conventions emphasized the need for concrete, concerted, simple and attainable solutions to achieve a truly sustainable future. They called on countries and Governments to set sustainable development goals, including achievable targets with regard to ensuring land sustainability, maintaining biodiversity and tackling climate change. They urged world leaders to move towards a land-degradation-neutral and carbon-neutral world and to stop the loss of biodiversity.

56. At the end of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, the Government of Brazil hosted a special commemorative event to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the three Rio Conventions. Representatives of the Brazilian Government, the Secretaries-General of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Executive Secretaries and representatives of the three Rio Conventions and several other dignitaries participated in the ceremony.

6. Global observance of the 2012 World Day to Combat Desertification

57. In its resolution 49/115, the General Assembly proclaimed 17 June World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. It invited all States to devote the World Day to promoting public awareness of desertification and the effects of drought and awareness of the implementation of the Convention. In 2012, 32 governmental, intergovernmental and civil society organizations sent to the Secretariat reports on events held in observance of the World Day.

58. In his message on that occasion, the Secretary-General stressed that global efforts to halt and reverse land degradation were integral to creating "the future we want". He pointed out that sustainable land use was a prerequisite for lifting billions from poverty, enabling food and nutrition security and safeguarding water supplies, and indeed constituted a cornerstone of sustainable development. Emphasizing that the people living in the world's arid lands, which constituted more than 40 per cent of the planet's land mass, were among the poorest and most vulnerable to hunger, he indicated that the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved by 2015 without preserving the soils on which the subsistence of these people depended. Without healthy soil, he pointed out, life on Earth would be unsustainable.

59. The global observance of the World Day was held at the Rio Conventions Pavilion in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to coincide with the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The one-day event received partnership support from United Nations agencies, regional entities, Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, which was indispensable not only for the organization of the event, but also for awareness-raising publicity.

60. The high-level round-table deliberations by heads of agencies were particularly attractive to the audience, as the spontaneous debate among the panellists on the theme "What sustainable land and soil management can do to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" prompted further substantive interactions between the panellists and the audience following the round-table discussions.

61. The names of the winners of the Land for Life Award were announced during an evening reception.

7. Land for Life Award

62. The Land for Life Award, an initiative established under the Convention to recognize achievement in the field of sustainable land management, was launched at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Changwon, Republic of Korea, by the Convention secretariat and partners. The application process generated 110 submissions from all over the world and in all six United Nations official languages. The applications were screened with the assistance of expert volunteers associated with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and 15 semifinalists were selected. A jury of eminent leaders in sustainable land management chose three winners, whose names were announced on 17 June in Rio de Janeiro at events marking the World Day to Combat Desertification. The first prize was awarded to Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods, in Haiti, which will receive $40,000. Two second-place winners will each receive $30,000: the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, in Turkey, and Conservation Efforts for Community Development, in Uganda. A recognition gala for the winners will be held in Doha in December 2012. The 2013 award cycle will open in October 2012.

8. United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)

63. At its sixty-fourth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 64/201, recalled its decision to declare the decade 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification and designated the Convention secretariat as the focal point of the Decade, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant United Nations bodies, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

64. During the reporting period, the inter-agency task force charged with the planning of activities in observance of the Decade was further expanded to 13 entities. The task force organized a global observance event in Tinerkouk, Algeria, hosted by the Government of Algeria (15-16 December 2011). Other observance events were held in Havana (4 July 2011), Addis Ababa (22 July 2011), Changwon, Republic of Korea (18 October 2011), Paris (9 November 2011) and Las Cruces, United States of America (12 July 2012). The events in Havana, Addis Ababa and

Paris were held in conjunction with the regional launch of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. In addition, two side events were organized by the task force on the margins of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Changwon, and the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Durban, South Africa.

65. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties decided to advance and strengthen existing initiatives under the Decade by, among other activities, compiling "a list of events, actions and activities" and, from these, developing a programme in support of the Decade (see decision 31/COP.10, para. 1).

9. Land Day 5

66. Land Day is aimed at increasing the amount of attention accorded by policymakers to land issues of relevance to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It is designed as a one-day event held in parallel with strategic intergovernmental multilateral environmental meetings and is organized jointly by the Convention secretariat and partner organizations. Land Day 5 was held on 6 December 2011, during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa.

67. Building on the momentum of global political attention to efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and drought generated by the high-level meeting on desertification, as well as on the outcomes of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, at which parties, for the first time, discussed the possibility of a global target of zero net land degradation, Land Day 5 advocated the endorsement by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of bold action at the global level with regard to land and soil.

68. Land Day 5 received Cabinet-level approval as an official South African governmental event during the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, delivered the keynote address at the opening.

69. The event also marked the launching of a campaign to engage the public in the agenda of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development with regard to moving towards a land-degradation-neutral world.

10. High-level meeting on national drought policy

70. Drought is widely recognized as a slowly advancing natural hazard that occurs as a consequence of natural climatic variability. In recent years, concern has grown worldwide that droughts may be increasing in frequency and severity as a result of changing climatic conditions. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in 2007, stated that the world has indeed been more drought-prone during the past 25 years. Responses to drought in most parts of the world are generally reactive in terms of crisis management and are known to be slow, poorly coordinated and not well integrated with overall socioeconomic and environmental policies. Consequently, the economic, social and environmental

impacts of drought have increased significantly worldwide. Because of their long-term socioeconomic impacts, droughts are by far the most damaging of all natural disasters.

71. In order to address the issue of drought, the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Meteorological Organization, in collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies and relevant United Nations offices, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, plan to organize and hold a high-level meeting on national drought policy in Geneva in March 2013. It is envisaged that the meeting will provide practical insight into useful science-based actions for addressing the key drought issues being considered by Governments and the private sector under the Convention and the various strategies for coping with drought as a platform towards the development of national drought management policies. It is also expected that national Governments will develop and adopt national drought management policies that engender cooperation and coordination at all levels of Government and increase the capacity needed to cope with extended periods of water scarcity in the event of drought.

C. Observations and possible General Assembly action

72. Since the General Assembly convened on 20 September 2011 for its high-level meeting on the theme "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and the consideration of those core issues by the recently concluded United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the international community has increased the amount of attention it devotes to issues previously given a lower profile, including in the current debate on global sustainability. This change in emphasis is key to addressing global policy challenges.

73. In fact, by 2030 the demand for food is likely to increase by 50 per cent, the demand for energy by 45 per cent and the demand for water by 30 per cent. Each of these demands will claim more land. This in turn will lead to further deforestation and environmental degradation unless we commit to restoring degraded land. Avoiding land degradation while restoring degraded land is crucial if the rural poor are to achieve energy, food and water security.

74. In Rio de Janeiro, world leaders recognized the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. They agreed to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development and resolved to take coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels to monitor land degradation globally. They also undertook to restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. Those policy developments are unprecedented. They require concerted action if they are to be made operational.

75. In this respect, the General Assembly may wish to endorse these commitments and to invite Member States and the United Nations system to implement them as a matter of priority, with a view to accelerating the pace and scale of sustainable development.

III. Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Introduction

76. In its resolution 66/202, the General Assembly invited the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to it at its sixty-seventh session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation, with a focus on issues of relevance and interest to the Assembly.

B. Preparation for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012

77. Since the issuance of the previous report to the General Assembly, in August 2011 (see A/66/291), three meetings of the Bureau of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention have been held in Montreal, on 30 October 2011 and 5 April and 6 May 2012.

78. In preparation for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012, a number of meetings, including of the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, have taken place.

79. The seventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and related provisions was held in Montreal from 31 October to 4 November 2011. There were approximately 250 participants, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, the business sector and academia. The Working Group adopted eight recommendations, including on progress in the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions; benefit-sharing from and the unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge; the development of elements of sui generis systems for the protection of traditional knowledge; mechanisms to promote the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in the work of the Convention; customary sustainable use as a new major component of the Article 8(j) work programme; the development of indicators relevant to traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use; and recommendations of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and terms of reference for the development of guidelines on repatriation. These will be forwarded to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration.

80. The fifteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention was held in Montreal from 7 to 11 November 2011. More than 400 representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, the business sector and academia attended the meeting. Eight recommendations were adopted that will be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration. The recommendations addressed, inter alia, a capacity-building strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative; indicators and other tools for assessing progress in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; ecosystem restoration; proposals to address gaps in international standards regarding invasive

alien species; implications of changes in the water cycle and freshwater resources for the implementation of the work programmes on inland water biodiversity; the sustainable use of biodiversity; Arctic biodiversity; and ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body.

81. The sixteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body was held in Montreal from 30 April to 5 May 2012. Nearly 500 representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities, the business sector and academia attended the meeting. The participants adopted 15 recommendations that will be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration. The recommendations addressed, inter alia, ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body and options for collaboration with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; the preparation of the fourth edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook*; island biodiversity; marine and coastal biodiversity; REDD+ safeguards for biodiversity; biodiversity and climate change; geoengineering; the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; the Global Taxonomy Initiative; new and emerging issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; biofuels and biodiversity; incentive measures; and collaborative work on biodiversity and agriculture, forests, and biodiversity and health.

82. The fourth meeting of the Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention was held in Montreal from 7 to 11 May 2012. The participants adopted eight recommendations, which will be submitted to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration. The recommendations addressed, inter alia, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; the strategy for resource mobilization; the Financial Mechanism (Global Environment Facility); a message to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; cooperation with the secretariats of other conventions; biodiversity for poverty eradication and development; the engagement of business; and South-South cooperation. The Working Group specifically discussed ways to achieve the necessary conditions — robust baselines and an effective reporting framework — to provide the Conference of the Parties with appropriate and adequate information/data as a basis for setting targets in order to mobilize resources for the achievement of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

83. The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, which was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Nagoya, Japan, was open for signature from 2 February 2011 to 1 February 2012. By the closing date, the Protocol had received 92 signatures. It will enter into force 90 days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. As at 12 July 2012, the following five parties had ratified the Protocol: Gabon, Jordan, Mexico, Rwanda and Seychelles.

84. An Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol was established the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The first meeting of the Committee was held from 6 to 10 June 2011; the second was held from 2 to 6 July 2012.

85. The first meeting of the Committee considered, inter alia, the following issues: the modalities of operation of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing House;

capacity-building and development related to the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol; measures to raise awareness of the importance of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources; and cooperative procedures and institutional mechanisms to promote compliance with the Protocol and to address cases of non-compliance.

86. Since the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol would not be held concurrently with the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in view of the fact that the Protocol had not yet entered into force, the Committee also recommended that the Conference of the Parties to the Convention reconvene the Committee for a third meeting to address outstanding issues relating to its workplan in preparation for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The Committee also made additional recommendations to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, including with respect to guidance for the Global Environment Facility regarding programme priorities for the sixth replenishment period, the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund and support for activities prior to the entry into force of the Protocol; the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Protocol, as part of the review of the implementation of the strategy for resource mobilization, including the establishment of targets; capacity-building and development initiatives as well as awareness-raising activities to support the ratification, early entry into force and implementation of the Protocol; intersessional activities to be carried out in preparation for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to address outstanding issues related to the need for and modalities of a global, multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism; the establishment of the pilot phase of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing House; and the development of a strategic framework for capacity-building and development under the Protocol.

87. In addition, at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, parties will be invited to take stock of progress made towards the ratification of the Protocol. Other outcomes of the Committee included direct recommendations to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol calling for the adoption of an awareness-raising strategy for the Protocol.

88. Moreover, the secretariat of the Convention has been carrying out a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to support the early ratification and entry into force of the Protocol, with support provided by the Global Environment Facility and the Japan Biodiversity Fund. For example, a medium-sized project of the Global Environment Facility amounting to $1 million is being implemented by the secretariat, with co-financing being provided by the Japan Fund. The objective of the project is to assist parties to the Convention that are eligible for Global Environment Facility funding in preparing for the ratification and early entry into force of the Protocol through targeted awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. The project will run until the end of March 2013. Activities carried out under the project have included: capacity-building workshops; the development of awareness-raising materials; targeted briefings for parliamentarians, decision makers and other stakeholders; and the inclusion of components to raise awareness about Protocol workshops on national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

C. Preparations for the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 1 to 5 October 2012

89. As at 11 July 2011, 163 parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity were also parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, the governing body of the Protocol, will hold its sixth meeting from 1 to 5 October 2012 in Hyderabad, India, back to back with the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

90. At the sixth meeting, parties will consider, inter alia, the progress made to date in the implementation of the Protocol, on the basis of information received through national reports and recommendations of an ad hoc technical expert group meeting held in May 2012, at which participants reviewed the status of implementation of the core elements of the Protocol. By the end of 2011, 143 parties to the Protocol had submitted their second national reports on the implementation of their obligations under the Protocol.

91. Also at the sixth meeting, parties will consider the status of the signature and ratification of the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol. The Supplementary Protocol, which sets out international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress relating to damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms, was opened for signature by the Secretary-General, the depository, from 7 March 2011 to 6 March 2012. By the closing date, the Supplementary Protocol had received 51 signatures. As at 11 July 2012, two parties to the Cartagena Protocol had deposited their instruments of ratification of the Supplementary Protocol. The Supplementary Protocol will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

92. Furthermore, the participants in the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol will consider the work undertaken in the area of risk assessment and risk management with respect to living modified organisms. In that regard, they will consider the document entitled "Guidance on risk assessment of living modified organisms" and the revised training manual "Risk assessment of living modified organisms", which have been finalized by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management.

93. Participants in the sixth meeting will have before them recommendations of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on how to promote compliance with the Protocol. They will review the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the workshop conducted in November 2011, in order to look into issues pertaining to socioeconomic considerations that parties may take into account when importing living modified organisms. They will also review the activities undertaken during the reporting period and the outcomes in the areas of information exchange through the Biosafety Clearing House, public awareness, education and participation, capacity-building, financial mechanism and resources, and cooperation with other organizations, convention secretariats and initiatives.

D. International Day for Biological Diversity and United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

94. The International Day for Biological Diversity was observed on 22 May 2012 in more than 55 countries. The worldwide observance took place in Chennai, India, and was focused on the theme of marine biodiversity. In his message on the occasion, the Secretary-General of the United Nations highlighted the fact that oceans covered almost three quarters of the surface area of the globe and supported a rich tapestry of life on which human communities relied. Yet, despite its importance, marine biodiversity was threatened by habitat loss, pollution, overfishing, the impacts of climate change, ocean acidification and other factors. The Secretary-General called for action to improve the management and conservation of oceans through initiatives of the United Nations, Governments and other partners to curb overfishing, expand marine protected areas and reduce ocean pollution and the impact of climate change so as to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Target of conserving 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas by 2020, a crucial step in protecting marine biodiversity for "the future we want". The Executive Secretary of the Convention, in his statement, highlighted such endeavours as the Sustainable Ocean Initiative and The Green Wave. The latter is designed to raise awareness about and encourage the involvement of children and youth in action for biodiversity by planting a tree at 10 a.m. local time, thus creating a "green wave" starting in the Far East and travelling west around the world. More than 4,000 groups involving tens of thousands of children and young people from more than 70 countries have participated in the initiative since 2008.

95. The global launch of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity was carried out in Japan from 17 to 19 December 2011. A number of regional launches were also organized, including several in conjunction with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, since the Decade to Combat Desertification runs in parallel with the Decade on Biodiversity. These events included the regional launches of both Decades in the Caribbean, held in Cuba (July 2011), and in the African region, held in Ethiopia (July 2011). The regional launch of the Decade on Biodiversity in Europe was held in Geneva (August 2011). A number of national launch events were also held in India (May 2011), the Philippines (May 2011), Ecuador (July 2011), the Dominican Republic (August 2011), Fiji (October 2011), the Republic of Korea (October 2011), Norway (November 2011), South Africa (December 2011) and Ghana (March 2012).

96. In addition, a memorandum of cooperation was signed on 20 September 2011 with 27 international agencies, organizations and multilateral environmental conventions, with respect to activities to be carried out under the aegis of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity in support of the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Several agencies have held events under the Decade, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which organized an event on the margins of its General Conference (November 2011) to mark the organization's new biodiversity strategy and its contribution to the Decade. Other joint activities with partners included joint interviews and webcasts regarding the Decade carried out in partnership with the Global Environment Facility.

97. A number of tools and platforms have also been put in place for outreach and advocacy in relation to the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. These include a Facebook page, a Twitter feed and a YouTube channel.[3]

E. Participation in and contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

98. The Executive Secretary of the Convention participated in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and addressed the round table held on 21 June 2012 on the theme "Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference". In his statement, he drew attention to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (endorsed in the Conference outcome document), and stressed that its implementation would contribute to effective follow-up to the Conference outcome in a range of areas, including oceans, food security and adaptation to unavoidable climate change. In this context, he stressed the centrality of biodiversity to the development of sustainable development indicators, since it was an important element underpinning all three dimensions of sustainable development, and a truly green economy.

99. A special event to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), that recognized the contribution of the Rio Conventions, was held upon the conclusion of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, on 15 June 2012. In his statement, the Executive Secretary stressed that the establishment of the Convention at the Earth Summit had resulted from the recognition that the Earth's biological diversity, and the essential ecosystem services that it provided, formed the basis for the health, food security, cultures, wealth and well-being of human society and that its maintenance was central to the achievement of sustainable development. Considerable progress had been made with the development of programmes of work to address the management of biodiversity in all the Earth's biomes, including through national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Several Protocols had also been developed, including the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol, with the latter having been adopted to give effect to the Convention's third objective. He emphasized that a number of practical measures had also been taken whereby protected areas had been extended to cover more than 13 per cent of the Earth's land mass. Nevertheless, if biodiversity was to be safeguarded it was imperative that the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets be implemented as a matter of urgency.

100. The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development also recognized the crucial role of biodiversity in ensuring sustainable development and called for greater efforts to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. It reiterated the international commitment to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention and affirmed the importance of implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets. Given the adoption of a new legal instrument on access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources, the Nagoya Protocol, parties to the Convention were invited to ratify or accede to the Protocol

[3] See www.facebook.com/UNBiodiversity, www.twitter.com/UNBiodiversity and www.youtube.com/UNBiodiversity, respectively.

so as to ensure its entry into force at the earliest possible opportunity. The Conference outcome also recognized the need for resources and therefore welcomed the strategy for resource mobilization in support of the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention.

101. Collaboration with the other Rio Conventions was strengthened through the Rio Conventions Pavilion, which was set up for the duration of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference. Significant joint activities undertaken in the Pavilion included a full day of commemorative activities to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Rio Conventions. A joint statement was issued on the occasion in which the Executive Secretaries of the three Conventions committed their secretariats to addressing sustainable development challenges through prioritized cross-cutting themes.

102. Collaboration with other United Nations agencies and entities was also strengthened through participation in and the showcasing of joint activities aimed at contributing to the Conference. Particularly notable was the distribution of a discussion paper entitled "Our planet, our health, our future: human health and the Rio Conventions: biological diversity, climate change and desertification", produced jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The discussion paper had been formulated with the participation of the Director General of WHO and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

F. Partnerships and outreach

103. Outreach to and the engagement of major groups and stakeholders continued during the reporting period. Building on decisions made at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the first meeting of the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity was held in Tokyo on 15 and 16 December 2011. The Global Platform on Business and Biodiversity website was launched at the meeting. Considerable work has also been undertaken to evaluate various standards so as to ascertain where gaps and other inconsistencies may exist. In addition, preparations are currently under way for a number of activities aimed at the engagement of business at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, including a high-level business/ministerial event, the second meeting of the Global Partnership and a sustainability solutions marketplace.

G. Recommendations

104. The General Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session, may wish to, inter alia:

(a) **Stress the importance of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012, including its high-level segment scheduled for 17 to 19 October 2012, since it will provide a unique opportunity to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nagoya biodiversity outcomes;**

(b) Call on all United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions to fully support and implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as appropriate;

(c) Call on donors to finance the implementation of decisions adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;

(d) Invite all relevant United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020;

(e) Encourage Governments and all relevant stakeholders to contribute to and support the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020;

(f) Urge States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention and thereby make participation universal;

(g) Urge parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization at the earliest opportunity so as to ensure its early entry into force and its implementation;

(h) Call upon Governments to continue to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity by supporting the objective of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and promoting safety in the development and application of modern biotechnology;

(i) Urge parties to the Convention that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to do so as soon as possible;

(j) Urge Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to ratify or accede to the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress in order to ensure its early entry into force and its implementation.